

Answering the Top 10 Interview Questions

“Why don’t you tell me about yourself?”

The interviewer does not want to know your life history! Instead, he or she wants you to tell how your background relates to doing the job. You can give a very brief personal history and then go right into the skills and experience you have. How would you answer this question in an interview?

“Why should I hire you?”

This is the most important question of all. If you don’t have a good reason, why should anyone hire you? It is often not asked this clearly, but this is the question behind many interview questions. The best answer is to show how you can solve problems for them, help the business make money, or provide something else of value that they need. Think about the most valuable thing you can do for an organization. That is probably what you should include in your answer. Think about the job you want. What strengths can you bring to that job? Answer the question in the space below.

“What are your major strengths?”

This is a direct question with little hidden meaning. Answer it by emphasizing the skills you have identified. These are the skills the employer is most concerned about. List at least two of your skills when answering the question.

“What are your major weaknesses?”

This is a question most job seekers don’t handle well. If you tell what you do poorly, you may not get the job. If you say you have no weaknesses, the interviewer won’t believe you. Ask yourself what the interviewer really wants to know. He/she want to know that you are aware of your weaknesses, and that you have learned to overcome them so that they don’t affect your work. Many of your strengths began in failure; we learned from them and got better. How would you answer this question?

“What sort of pay do you expect to receive?”

Knowing how to answer this question could be worth a lot of money to you. Never discuss salary until you are being offered the job! It is also wise to know the probable salary range beforehand. If you think the employer pays between \$14,000 and \$16,000/year, state your range as “mid to upper teens.” That covers the amount the employer probably had in mind and gives you room to get more. The best approach is to avoid discussing salary until you have been offered the job. How would you answer this question?

“How does your previous experience relate to the jobs we have here?”

This one requires a direct response. This question is saying “Can you prove you have the experience and skills to do the job?” Be sure to mention any specific skills or training you have that will help you do the job. Include your greatest job-related strengths in your answer to this question.

“What are your plans for the future?”

This question is really asking whether you are likely to remain on the job. They also want to know if you will be happy with the salary; will you leave to raise a family or relocate because of a spouse’s job transfer; do you have a history of leaving jobs after a short stay; and are you over-qualified. Try to put yourself in the employer’s place. How would you answer this question?

“What will your former employers say about you?”

The interviewer really wants to know about your skills and whether you can be depended on. Many employers will check your references, so if you are less than honest about problems in previous jobs, you could get caught! If everyone you ever worked for thinks you are great, answering this question will be easy. But almost everyone has had some type of problem. Many interviewers have been fired sometime

in their careers. It is no sin and often has little to do with being a good worker. If you learned something from the experience, say so. Write your response to this question.

“Why are you looking for this sort of position and why here?”

Employers know that you will do better in the job you really want. They want to make sure you know what you want. They also want you to tell them what you like about the job. The closer you come to wanting what they have, the better. The best answer for this is the absolute truth. You need a clear idea of the type of work you want. You also need to know the type of organization and people you want to work with. How would you answer this?

“Why don’t you tell me about your personal situation?”

Very few interviewers will ask this question so directly. They will try to find out in casual conversation. The issue is whether you can be counted on. They will look for signs that you are unstable or unreliable. When responding to a question about your personal life, be friendly and positive. The message to give is that your personal situation will not hurt your ability to do a good job. Indeed, your situation could offer some benefits to the company. If you do mention that you have children, are a single parent, etc., be sure to back that up by saying that you have daycare taken care of and that transportation is not a problem either. Always be able to let them know that you have everything under control.
